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**BEAUTY IN A BOTTLE: A MULTIMODAL APPROACH TO
THE CONSTRUCTION OF MEANING**

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Monografia apresentada ao Programa de Pós-Graduação
em Letras da PUC-Rio como requisito parcial para a
obtenção do título de Especialista em Língua Inglesa.

Orientadora:
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ABSTRACT

On the basis that visual images are not only part of everyday life but also means of communication and interaction, this paper intends to develop a brief study founded on a sample of a multimodal text - a video advertisement - that combines both verbal and non-verbal systems of symbols. The genre chosen for this case study is an advertisement film that is initially intended to be analyzed under the perspective of Systemic Functional Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis in a multifunctional approach to language as a system of meaning. Power and ideology are also briefly discussed in this paper, as well as the intertextuality between the ad analyzed and other well-known artistic expressions.

KEY WORDS: advertisements; multimodality; CDA; SFL; intertextuality

RESUMO

Com base no fato de que as imagens visuais não são apenas parte da vida cotidiana, mas que também constituem meios de comunicação e interação, este trabalho pretende desenvolver um breve estudo baseado em uma amostra de um texto multimodal - um comercial em vídeo - que combina sistemas de símbolos verbais e não verbais. O gênero escolhido para este estudo de caso é um filme publicitário que, em princípio, se pretende analisar sob a perspectiva da Linguística Sistêmico-Funcional e da Análise Crítica do Discurso, em uma abordagem multifuncional da linguagem, aqui entendida como um sistema de significados. Poder e ideologia também são brevemente discutidos neste artigo, bem como a intertextualidade entre o comercial analisado e outras expressões artísticas bem conhecidas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: comerciais, multimodalidade, Análise Crítica do Discurso, Linguística Sistêmico-Funcional, intertextualidade

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Beauty in a bottle: a multimodal approach to the construction of meaning

“... text is a rich, many-faceted phenomenon that ‘means’ in many different ways. It can be explored from many different points of view” (HALLIDAY, 2004a, p. 3)

1 INTRODUCTION

It is undeniable – to put it mildly - that humans live drowned in a world of images that mediate their relationships with other human beings from different cultures and places. Since the second half of the twentieth century the development of technologies has fostered the use of visual texts to make sense of and derive meaning from the world. That is a good reason to go deeper into this area of studies so as to better understand what is in question, that is, to identify intentions and beliefs behind the use of visual texts.

When interviewing Nicholas Mirzoeff, a leading Media, Culture, and Communication Professor at New York University, Marquard Smith, head of Doctoral Studies in the School of Humanities at the Royal College of Art, in London, stressed quite properly that:

...our lives, experiences, and knowledges are mediated and re-mediated by way of the televisual, the cinematic, and other kinds of vision and forms of visual media: that we're under constant surveillance; that there's an increase in the wealth and diversity of our visual encounters; and that this, in part, has to do with the legacy of living in a post-modern culture dominated by the flowing, the circulating, the enlivening, distracting, enervating force of images.(MIRZOEFF, 2009, p.21-22)

The act of looking is a practice used to communicate, influence and be influenced that triggers a person's previous knowledge in an attempt to interpret what is being conveyed in the image. That certainly involves relations of power and ideology derived from a learning process to which every person is submitted and which is guided by a necessity of negotiating social relationships.

In order to understand how and why people derive meaning from texts, whether written, spoken or visual, some researchers have developed theoretical frameworks designed to study, describe, and analyze the way humans produce and interpret meanings derived from communication. At first, the multifunctional approach to language developed by Halliday (2004a), called Systemic-Functional Linguistics (SFL), together with Fairclough (1995a), Wodak and Meyer's (2009) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) were elected as theoretical background to support this brief study on the reading of texts, as long as both frameworks help not only to disclose ideological underpinnings frequently found in visual and verbal modes, but also to better understand the social construction of discourse in media texts. But then, as the research developed deeper, there was a need to expand the frontiers by adding

more investigation devoted to the significance of visual culture studies in multimodal discourse analysis.

The purpose of this paper is to describe and analyze a chosen advertisement from the perspective of SFL – a multifunctional approach to language as a social phenomenon – and CDA – with its three central and constitutive perceptions (power, ideology and critique), along with the concept of multimodality in texts. The reason why the genre advertisement was chosen as the subject of analysis is because it consists of an instance of multimodality, as it combines both verbal and non-verbal modes with the purpose of communicating and interacting with the reader, showing that language in use (discourse) is socially constitutive and multifunctional, serving the organization and structuring of social life. (WODAK & MEYER, 2009, p.6) As a matter of fact, advertisements are considered to be one of the most important cultural factors in the molding and reflection of everyday life.

In terms of structure, this paper presents a brief literature review, followed by the methods section, the description of the advertisement motion picture chosen, and the analysis of the verbal language adopted in the ad. The investigation, then, proceeds with the study of substantial non-verbal language, which is the core of the ad, with visual elements that foster the audience, reminding them of ideological factors that are present in their social and cultural collective imaginary. The final section of this study presents the concluding remarks about the elected themes highlighted in this work.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In the beginnings of the research on the Systemic Functional Linguistics theory, Halliday used to focus the notion of meaning on the study of signs. According to those studies, language is the raw material used not only to transform world experience into meaning but also to make up knowledge. (HALLIDAY, 1978, p.21)

Halliday, later on, widened his scope from the study of sign to the study of sign systems. This shift of perspective enlarged the range of semiotic resources so as to encompass other kinds of languages – verbal and non-verbal, which include semiotic, multimodal, and visual aspects, such as multimedia, the Internet, images, and gestures.

With that spread in the field, the studies on monomodal texts were left aside and turned to the realm of multimodality, which encompasses several other modes used simultaneously, such as speech, image, writing, and music, among others, operating together to make meaning. Kress (2009) is one of the researchers who encourages and supports the studies of the role of visual images in the social environment of contemporary communication.

The interdisciplinary approach to texts called Critical Discourse Analysis was conveyed by Fowler (1979) and then developed by other researchers, such as Fairclough (1989). This researcher and sociolinguist proposes the investigation of social and political significances in the analysis of texts. Issues of power, domination, and history then emerged from this approach, which was even deepened and developed by Wodak (1989) and Van Dijk (1993).

A variety of theories dialogues in the scope of Critical Discourse Analysis, making it necessary to develop conceptual tools to connect discourse analysis with sociological positions, actions and social structures (WEISS & WODAK, 2003). Van Dijk¹ claims that, in fact, CDA should be called Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), as long as it “involves critical *analysis*, but also critical *theory*, as well as critical *applications*”. Nevertheless, taken as a method in social scientific research, it regards language as social practice where the context of language use is of high relevance in the making of meaning. Accordingly, in CDA, the text –

¹ Available at <http://www.discourses.org/OldArticles/Critical%20discourse%20studies.pdf>. Accessed on 10 January, 2015.

meant as “potentially anything that is created by humans to communicate meaning”² - is the basic unit of communication and social practice. “CDS scholars are typically interested in the way discourse (re) produces social *domination*, that is, the *power abuse* of one group over others, and how dominated groups may discursively *resist* such abuse.” (VAN DIJK, 2009, p.63)

Language is shaped by culture. And that is why another important component in the CDA theoretical framework is related to culture. The imposing forces that language and culture inflict on the members of the group are called socialization or acculturation.

[The] members of a social group ... acquire common ways of viewing the world through their interactions with other members of the same group. These views are reinforced through institutions like the family, the school, the workplace, the church, the government, and other sites of socialization throughout their lives. (GRAMSCH, 2009, p.6)

In the following sections, those theoretical frameworks will be discussed during the proposed analysis of the advertisement chosen for this paper.

² Available at <http://pt.scribd.com/doc/57268988/Analysing-Texts-in-Contexts>. Accessed on 31 July, 2014.

3 METHODOLOGY

This qualitative case study consists of the analysis of an advertisement motion picture in the light of the theoretical frameworks of Critical Discourse Analysis and the Systemic Functional Linguistics theory. The genre advertisement was chosen because it enables the analyst to work with a contemporary discourse that combines modes of communication such as language, picture, and music (COOK, 2001, p.xii), elements which add to the meaning of the message. The word *discourse*, then is here taken “to refer to the whole process of social interaction of which a text is just a part” (FAIRCLOUGH, 1989, p.24). In order to apply those theories and analyze them in context, the advertisement motion picture selected is the one on *La vie est belle* perfume, by Lancôme. Both Manilowski’s concepts of context of situation and of culture are used in order to guide this analysis (HALLIDAY, 1989, p.6).

The holistic and interdisciplinary approach taken by CDA, when considering language and context together, helps in the description and analysis of the context of communication, that is, “who is communicating with whom and why; in what kind of society and situation; through what medium; how different types and acts of communication evolved, and their relationship to each other” (COOK, 2001, p.1).

As to the discussion concerning power and ideology, it is important to notice that, according to Fairclough (1989: 1-2), the sociolinguistic conventions for performing language functions in a given context have a dual relation of power, as those conventions can either engender certain relations of power (influence) or, at the same time, incorporate differences of power (be influenced). As a matter of fact, the dual relation of power is a game that is played in the advertisement chosen for this analysis: the features used in the production of the ad intend to influence the audience, but, at the same time, the making of the ad is influenced by the context of culture in which it is embedded and this helps to allure the readers to purchase the product that is being presented. It is interesting to notice that the audience is generally not consciously aware of that power game, as long as people typically take the conventions as implicit common-sense assumptions.

Accordingly, Van Dijk points out that the principles of Critical Discourse Analysis shed light on the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance, which is here understood as “the exercise of social power by elites, institutions or groups, that results in social inequality, including political, cultural, class, ethnic, racial and gender inequality”.

(VAN DIJK, 1993: 250-251). Dominance is exerted by means of discursive strategies that lead those who are subject to power to think that dominance is a natural or legitimate force.

Moreover, it is important to notice that CDA has its origins in different disciplinary backgrounds such as Literary Studies, Anthropology, Social Sciences, Discourse Studies, and Philosophy, among many others, and that fact turns CDA into a broad field of studies that allow for innovation and that “are multifarious, derived from quite different theoretical backgrounds, oriented towards different data and methodologies.” (WODAK & MEYER, 2009, p.5).

In the next section, a detailed description of the advertisement as well as some of the results of this analysis can be found.

4 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Humans conduct their social lives mainly through language. Whether verbal or non-verbal, language is shaped and socialized through culture. As a matter of fact, language reveals, embodies, and symbolizes one's cultural reality in multiple and complex ways. At the same time, the knowledge that is expressed by means of language comes from a repertoire of common collective beliefs, expectations, and points of view that is shared with the members of a specific social group. Nevertheless, depending on how and when those members use verbal and non-verbal language, that common shared experience gives enough space for the creation and evolution of new ideas and meanings, enlarging their repertoire. In this process, some other ideas and meanings can also be forgotten or left aside, changing their collection of experiences. Through the shared ideas in the social group, those language users identify themselves and make that community consider their peculiarities as symbols of their social identity (KRAMSCH, 2009, p.3).

When reading an advertisement taken from any means of communication, the audience is engaged in a socio-interactive activity in which they mobilize their culture-specific background information, including their own life experiences, in order to derive meaning from the information shown. Therefore, there is a common collective expectation that can be liberating and constraining at the same time. The particular meaning derived from the words and images in the movie is imposed on the social group, impelling its members towards the same direction. Nevertheless, each member can resort to the symbols and signs shown in the motion picture in a very particular way and so diversity concerning the interpretation may arise among that specific speech community. (KRAMSCH, 2009, p.5).

These generic concepts stored in each reader's mind are called *schemata* (a term borrowed from Psychology, which means cognitive frameworks or concepts that help organize and interpret information³). The concept of *schemata* itself was coined "to explain how the information carried in stories is rearranged in the memories of readers or listeners to fit in with their expectations" (SWALES, 1990, p.83). The combination between the reader's *schemata* - which include, among other features, world views, stereotypes, and archetypes - and the multiple pieces of information enclosed in the advertisement leads the reader to understand new perceptions in the data and to interpret some of the new pieces of information

³ Available at http://psychology.about.com/od/sindex/g/def_schema.htm. Accessed on 10 April, 2015.

available in the message. In order to activate different *schemata* from different audiences, the *La vie est belle* advertisement is loaded with multiple distinctive pieces of information so as to impel different audiences and readers to derive meaning from the combination of multiple factors found in the commercial. The more varied information is employed in the advertisement, the more chances the reader has to combine his/her *schemata*, identify him/herself with the message, and take the decision of buying a product – a bottle of perfume - the essence of which cannot strike the audience through conventional media.

Advertisements are very well-known for using language “in establishing and maintaining value systems and systems of social control” (HALLIDAY, 2004b, p.50). With that purpose in mind, the *La vie est belle* advertisement was conceived by Lancôme to be “a universal declaration to the beauty of life⁴”. It is interesting to notice that the motto of the ad intends to emotionally involve the presumed customers from every corner of the world, as it is *a universal declaration*. Such a noun phrase clearly intends to remind the client of the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and leads the customer to feel like a member of the human family whose right to “freedom, justice, and peace” is plainly stated at the preamble of that document⁵. Also, the noun phrase *beauty of life* induces the customer to the idealization of life, ratified and confirmed by the glamorous images of a luxurious setting full of elegant and beautiful people.

But if the idea of universality described above is narrowed down to some capitalist well-known Western cultures, one would realize that the integrated body of culture available to that specific Western community, called its semiotic potential, includes the three general modes of meaning, i.e., the ways of doing, being and saying of each community (HALLIDAY, 1989, p.99). Thus, the analysis made in the following pages is derived from the semiotic potential of a Western analyst, who is affected by issues of power and domination prevailing in his/her social environment and culture and, as a consequence, he/she will be able to offer the readers a “biased” analysis, perhaps far different from the analysis an analyst belonging to an Eastern culture might produce.

Another important feature that must be taken into account in this discussion is the fact that the process of creativity in advertisements shows the diversified production of a unique sort of text. The simple watching of an ad reminds the spectator of a countless number of

⁴ Available at <http://www2.lancome.com/en/ww/fragrance/women/la-vie-est-belle/la-vie-est-belle-legere-31301r.aspx#lcat=en-ww-home-html-push5>. Accessed on 10 April, 2015.

⁵ Available at <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>. Accessed on 10 April, 2015.

previous constructions to which he/she has been exposed before and that impels him/her to engage in the discovering of a network of textual relations. A piece of artistic work such as an advertisement is composed of other already produced distinct text types and the heterogeneity found in the ad emanates from intertextuality. Coined by Julia Kristeva and based on her studies on Bakhtin's theories, the term intertextuality has changed the way of considering an artistic production. According to those studies, any signifying system, code or tradition is established and built from previous constructions. Intertextuality, then, "is constructed of a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another. The notion of intertextuality replaces that of intersubjectivity and poetic language is read as at least double" (KRISTEVA, 1986, p.37).

In the next section, the results of the data analysis that was carried out on the *La vie est belle* advertisement are presented. The key features that were investigated in the motion picture can be found in the following section.

4.1 DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The *La vie est belle* advertisement opens with the question that is analyzed in section 4.2.1: "In a world full of dictates, and conventions, could there be another way"? (Figure 1) The interrogative sentence is written in white letters on a black background with very little light that comes from blurred spots suggesting an indoor environment. It is important to bear in mind that the sound track, to be analyzed in section 4.2.2, is present all the time during this one-minute movie.

Another important feature is that the production is shot in slow motion, except for the following scene outdoors. That next move is easily depicted by the reader. It shows a very famous Parisian view, with the Eiffel Tower in the center, at night. (Figure 2) The picture reproduces the pattern shown in the previous scene, as the streets are dark but this time fully illuminated by thousands of white bright spots. There is a feeling of movement, as the lights seem to flicker, as if simulating the buzzing of the Parisian streets. That very urban night setting is followed by an indoor luxurious place illuminated by three sophisticated white crystal chandeliers and some sconces. (Figure 3) All the sources of light radiate soft white illumination.

As the place continues to be unfolded before the audience's eyes, always in slow motion, the readers are able to notice there is a stylish reception going on. All the guests – men and women – are wearing black outfits, except for the main character in the ad - a single woman who is first seen in the very center of the image and who is performed by Hollywood actress Julia Roberts. (Figure 4) Here, the idea is to induce the audience to the feeling that she is the element which contrasts with that conventional environment. This view is conveyed by the sexy gleaming white dress she is wearing in contrast to all the other guests who wear black. Following this first image, there is a quick zoom towards Julia's face, so as to make it easier for the spectator to recognize her, and then her whole body picture is shown revealing details of her wonderful white dress and styled hair. Her image always remains in the center of the picture, naturally attracting the readers' attention to the contrast between the ordinary guests and her. Still using slow motion, so as to give the audience more chances to enjoy the action that is going on and capture the details, some of the guests notice her presence and turn their faces in order to better see her.

Another striking contrast is in the fact that the movie star smiles all the time in order to portray the idea of happiness and confidence connected to beauty, challenge and audacity (Figure 5), in opposition to the conventional melancholic guests around her (Figure 6). That is the time she notices that the guests, as well as she herself, have elegant silver strings in their wrists showing that they are not free from conventions and the dull routines of life, romance, and business. (Figure 7)

At the time she realizes that everybody in the party is attached to a formal world, she stops smiling for some seconds, but she does not hesitate in setting free from the strings, showing she is not attached to conventions. (Figure 8) An interesting detail in this scene depicts that, although it is night, one of the guests wears sunglasses in order to protect her eyes from the intense brightness that comes from Julia Roberts's image. The actress shows her assertiveness by setting free from the strings and going up a bright, white staircase (Figure 9). At the same time, the brightness on and around her seems to get stronger, as if she were protected by wearing the perfume.

The last image changes from a close up on her face to the initial setting of Paris, and the Eiffel Tower in the center, by night, superposed by the bottle of *La vie est belle*, which seems to involve and incorporate the iconic Parisian portrait and to imprison the image in the bottle, showing that by wearing the perfume the customer has a chance of feeling as if she were in

Paris and, as an extension, being smart, elegant and free from conventions, as it is shown when the bottle of perfume containing a piece of Paris inside also succeeds in breaking the silver strings around it (Figure 10).

The advertisement described above certainly aroused some expectations about the product in the audience. In order to suggest that the spectator should buy a bottle of *La vie est belle*, at least some common assumptions and memories must be shared, no matter which background each one in the audience comes from. That is the only way the message in the advertisement could be understood. And that is the reason that justifies the multiple references included in the one-minute-long production.

4.2 VERBAL LANGUAGE

4.2.1 A fragrance by Lancôme

There is a link between the name of the perfume and its manufacturer at the end of the motion picture. The audience is told the perfume is made and distributed by Lancôme. The name is both written and spoken so as not to be forgotten. Besides, it is presented in white color, capital letters and bold type. The white color is associated with one of the two prevailing colors in the advertisement and it dialogues with the leading figure in the moving picture, who is wearing a white dress in contrast with all the other individuals who wear black.

Another significant feature in the advertisement is that it is given more credibility and reliability with the mentioning of Lancôme, which is a reminder of traditional luxury already endorsed by celebrities such as Juliette Binoche and Uma Thurman, besides Julia Roberts. The brand was created in 1935 inspired in the roses grown around the *Château de Lancosme*, in France (Tungate, 2011). Those roses were then taken as a worldwide symbol of French beauty. Lancôme was acquired by L'Oréal and it was intended to help in the disclosure of the French famous elegance to the rest of the world, as long as, among other reasons, “it rhymed with Brantôme, Vendôme and other famous French names”⁶.

Lancôme claims itself to be “a pioneering brand and visionary ahead of its time”⁷. Its ambassadors [being Julia Roberts one of them] are considered to be “beautiful icons who

⁶ Available at <http://www.lancome-usa.com/heritage.html>. Accessed on 10 August, 2015.

⁷ Available at <http://www.loreal.com/brand/1%E2%80%99or%C3%A9al-luxe/lanc%C3%B4me> . Accessed on 20 September, 2015.

love life, who are full of energy, and talent; icons every woman can relate to. They [the ambassadors] embody a radiant, confident and universal beauty while keeping modern and down to earth⁸". The brand considers *La vie est belle* as one of its best-sellers.

4.2.2 "In a world full of dictates and conventions, could there be another way?"

The rhetorical question is asked at the very beginning of the video, followed by an overwhelming view of Paris by night. This strategy is used by the producers so as to call the audience's attention to what will be presented next. The city can be immediately recognized by the iconic image of the Eiffel tower. Also, Paris is typically known worldwide as the "City of Light". This justifies the incredible image used to introduce the advertisement, which leaves no doubt about the setting chosen to shoot the motion picture. Although rhetorical questions have the structure of an inquiry, they show the force of an assertion. In order to make the strength of that assertion, the video itself can be easily taken as a visual justification for Julia Roberts's own single verbal question: there could surely be another way. From what is shown in the beginning of the video, the audience realizes it is possible to get free from dictates and conventions in order to enjoy the beauty of life. Then, chances are that the audience will continue to watch the ad in order to discover how to escape from the burdens of everyday life.

Rhetorical questions are an effective device to call the reader's attention to what is going to be unveiled in the video. From what is shown before their eyes, the allured audience is asserted that if they are willing to break some rules, they can get rid of dictates and conventions and lead a better life.

Another interesting point is the use of two words that share the same semantic field: dictates and conventions. The author takes advantage of that word association not only to reinforce the idea of the demanding social environment of everyday life, the world where ordinary people live, but also to contrast it with another opposing universe full of beauty, joy, and pleasure that is offered and presented to the perfume's future customers.

All the atmosphere created by that single question helps in the constitution of the perfume wearer's identity. An observer could realize that there is a lot of daring in the way the question is asked. The model, Julia Roberts, herself was chosen to embody this daring woman

⁸ Available at <http://www.loreal.com/brand/1%E2%80%99or%C3%A9al-luxe/lanc%C3%B4me> . Accessed on 20 September, 2015.

as long as she cannot be considered an ordinary person. Besides, as an actress, she has already played a dozen extraordinary female characters that have marked an age in the film industry. The potential customers are attracted by the appeal in the question asked in the ad because a feeling of belonging to the group of powerful, daring women is aroused.

4.2.3 The use of could

The verb used in the formulation of the rhetorical question that opens the advertisement is the semantically rich modal auxiliary *could*. Although *could* is considered to be the past form of *can*, it is more likely used related to modal meaning, frequently performing the main role of conveying stance, position or situation. According to Biber et al., the modal *could* expresses three major categories of meaning which combine intrinsic and extrinsic connotations, namely:

Permission/possibility or ability

Obligation/necessity

Volition/prediction

This way, in the advertisement, *could* is not used to communicate past time at all. Rather, the auxiliary *could* qualifies the meaning of the main copular verb *to be* together with the existential *there*, adding unreality or a hypothetical situation to it in a present time reference. It seems that is the case in this rhetorical question: when the narrator addresses to the audience, possibility is conveyed by the modal auxiliary both in personal (intrinsic) and logical (extrinsic) meanings, leading the audience to believe that what they are about to see in the movie is the only way to break the rules and get rid of social dictates and conventions.

In the question, there are two types of meanings combined in the use of *could*: if, on the one hand, the advertisement has the intention of controlling or directing (re)actions and events by means of human or other agents volition, desire or pleasure (here, the narrator who happens to be the actress wearing the perfume), on the other hand the production stands for the logical status of states or events related to levels of certainty, likelihood, or logical necessity (of wearing the perfume for being successful). Then, both personal (intrinsic) and logical (extrinsic) meanings are present in the structure of the rhetorical question: used in an oral elocution, *could* implies a logical possibility, but, at the same time, *could* used with a

non-human subject (the existential *there* followed by the indefinite noun phrase *another way*) suggests logical (detachable from the audience) meaning.

4.2.4 The song: *Beautiful days*

Composed by Marc A. Huyghens and sung by the Belgian group Venus, *Beautiful days* is a song released in 2003 and that had already been presented in the 2004 French-produced science-fiction motion picture entitled *Immortal*, directed by Enki Bilal, and loosely based upon his comic book *La Foire aux Immortels* (The Carnival of Immortals). In the *La vie est belle* advert, just some pieces of the song are used to reinforce the images on the video. The main idea conveyed in the lyrics is the one related to the concept of freedom and of how it may lead the consumer to a better, beautiful life. The song helps to induce the reader to the ideology that freedom can be achieved through the wearing of *La vie est belle*. They are:

I wish I could be
Perfectly free
...
And live some beautiful days
In a magical place
Beautiful loves
...
Beautiful days⁹

Those fragments of the lyrics were carefully chosen in order to add to the idea of getting free from the “dictates and conventions” of the world. They also point out to how beautiful life can be when freedom is attained. Those who dare to fight for freedom (wearing the perfume) reach a magical place, an idealized world which is available only for the adventurous.

⁹ Available at http://www.lyricsmania.com/beautiful_days_lyrics_venus.html. Accessed on 7 April, 2015.

4.3 NON-VERBAL LANGUAGE

The advertisement created to present *La vie est belle* makes more use of images than verbal language. This is justified due to the fact that contemporary and postmodernist societies have been overrun by new technologies that generate images. The advent of television was promptly followed by the popularization of personal computers and other portable gadgets that make use of the Internet and that invade people's daily lives with a huge offer of information and entertainment for all ages. With all these facilities based on images, in due time advertisements gradually left verbal language behind and then made their way from the newspapers and magazines pages to the screen, definitely adhering to visual culture. According to Nicholas Mirzoeff,

Visual culture is concerned with visual events in which information, meaning or pleasure is sought by the consumer in an interface with visual technology. By visual technology, I mean any form of apparatus designed either to be looked at or to enhance natural vision, from oil painting to television and the Internet. (MIRZOEFF, 2008, p.3)

Both verbal and non-verbal languages are used in this advertisement in order to create the *La vie est belle* wearer's identity. The identity construction of the perfume's bearer is created through the dramatic and performative role played by the model, Julia Roberts, who personifies the powerful woman who chooses to wear that specific perfume and, consequently, who embodies that representative wearer. This cultural identity construction is founded in the definition and opposition of oneself (the perfume's wearer) and the others - those who do not wear *La vie est belle* (WODAK, 2012, p.216). The potential female customers are attracted by their feeling of belonging to a very special ideal group of successful women.

Cultural identities embody different emotional factors related to difference and to the sense of belonging or not belonging to a certain group. Those factors build up the idea of "us" in opposition to "them", no matter how real these groups can be. In that construction of identities, the issue of power is crucial in the attribution of certain characteristics or labels to an individual. As a matter of fact, it seems that the feeling of belonging to a group can be beyond the control of a single person and it is not just a question of choice, but, rather, to dominant discourses that prevail in a certain social community. Identity is related to the

construction of the self and the playing of a role that has the power of convincing the others that one is who “he/she” appears to be (CLARKE, 2011, p.510).

Another important issue in this discussion - and in the consideration of non-verbal language for this analysis - is concerned with the reproduction of knowledge and ideas that an ad provides to its readers. This new knowledge that is offered by the ad is originated from something that is already known by the audience in that social group, that is part of each one's *schemata*, and that is developed throughout the watching of the motion picture. Ideas that already exist and that circulate in a certain society are then reorganized, giving the audience a new translation to perceptions that already existed (WILLIAMSON, 1978, p.99). In the topics below, new ways of considering and recycling knowledge already known will be discussed and taken into consideration in the interpretation to this ad.

4.3.1 The choice of the model

As it has already been said, the advertisement is featured by Julia Roberts, a famous Hollywood star, once awarded for Oscar's best actress's prize and nominated for a couple of times. She is considered to be a beautiful and famous woman who can be trusted and who is well-known for her assertiveness and determination. The characters she played in motion pictures such as *Pretty Woman* and *Notting Hill*, among many others, transmit an image of an independent, brave, unique woman who is far from leading a conventional life but who is always well-succeeded in the end of the movie. Such background conveys credibility and reliability to the advertisement because it urges the selling of a product that is meant for outstanding women. In the audience's mind a connection is made between wearing the perfume and being successful, beautiful, and daring.

There is a very important point to be mentioned here. It has to do with the new role of women in contemporary society and the recent female stereotype these days. The woman depicted in the ad embodies the modern woman of the twenty-first century and unravels the traditional hierarchy of functions granted to women. She is independent, successful, and self-supporting, yet with a feminine touch: a social idealized model to be followed by other women. In a clear contrast to the way women were depicted in ads in a time not so far away, this approach is represented in the ad by means of a specific ritualized behavioral style of the independent woman of today.

4.3.2 Capitalism and Western world

This analysis takes into account one of the most important features in this context of culture for the understanding of the advertisement chosen: the capitalist social system. Capitalism is typically defined as “a system of economics based on the private ownership of capital and production inputs, and on the production of goods and services for profit”.¹⁰ Under the capitalist system, consumption is mandatory for corporate growth. In such state of affairs, the customer is incited to consume as much as possible, even if the use of credit cards or loans be necessary for the sake of commercial profit¹¹. In order to keep the consumer confident and moved to purchase, the commercial companies make use of mass communication devices, especially advertisements, in order to influence audiences by means of persuasion and manipulation¹², encouraging consumerism and the use of disposable goods.

Such a corporate experience promoted within the capitalist system was culturally developed by means of advertising – taken as an institutionalized system of commercial information and persuasion -, which, in turn, was developed to sell goods. That way, advertising goes hand in hand with the community’s hegemonic economy and culture. The use of advertising campaigns calls into question the set of beliefs that compose ideology, which guides, tastes, and dictates the way a community should behave, feel, and look in order to lead, according to the beliefs imposed, suitable, pleasing and perfect lives. Humans have always advertised, but the number of adverts has really increased with the growth of newspapers, together with the Industrial Revolution and the competition among commercial competitors. Advertisement the way it is known nowadays was fostered by modern large-scale capitalism, from the first half of the twentieth century, especially after World War II, in order to validate consumption and it became so powerful due to the huge sums of money it was able to raise not only for the capitalist production, but also for the media (WILLIAMS, 1980, p.217).

Another aspect concerning the ideology that pervades the capitalist society is that although the distinction between its members is established by their role in the productive chain, that is, by the amount of money they possess and their social position in their group, it is the purchasing of the goods produced by those workers that grant them the false idea of

¹⁰ Available at <http://www.investopedia.com/terms/c/capitalism.asp>. Accessed on 7 April, 2015.

¹¹ Available at <http://www.gegenstandpunkt.com/english/consumption.html>. Accessed on 9 April, 2015.

¹² Available at <http://www.uta.edu/huma/illuminations/kell6.htm>. Accessed on 9 April, 2015.

belonging to the highest layers of their social group, leading them to identify themselves by what they consume. That situation empowers and strengthens consumerism, allowing those individuals who are on the top of the chain to become even richer. “We are made to feel that we can rise or fall in society through what we are able to buy, and this obscures the actual class basis which still underlies social position.” (WILLIAMSON, 1978, p.13)

Advertisements on sophisticated, expensive products are publicized on mass media, showing a shift in the traditional models of credibility, where authority has given way to a new paradigm that still bears authority, but that uses more sophisticated methodologies for convincing, inducing, and persuading (LANKES, 2007, p.678). As a major part of capitalist business organization, advertisements are now beyond the commercial context. So much so that general communication now lives on them, and social and personal values may now be encouraged or not by means of them.

4.3.3 Perfumes and France

In order to analyze the kind of publicity material presented, one of the first questionings that arises is to understand the reason why perfumes deserve an expensive and sophisticated advertisement like that.

The seventeenth century marked the relation of the French with perfumes, stimulated by the French monarchs, although the distillation of perfumes dates back to the ninth century, probably in Persia (BRAUDEL, 1985, p.248-249). In the eighteenth century, perfumes abounded in France, with essences of violet, rose, and jasmine, among others. In France, sophistication at that time was reached by means of feminine beauty treatments and women's toilette featured the combination of powders, essences, cosmetics necessary to change one's nature. That way, France was ahead of all the other European countries of that time (BRAUDEL, 1985, p.330-331).

The famous French master perfumer Edmond Roudnitska points out to the French Restoration (1814 – 1848) as a new mark for the prevailing success of perfumes due to the new discoveries in the field of chemistry. According to Jones, “The craft of making perfume was reinvented during the course of the nineteenth century into a capitalist industry” (JONES, 2010, p.15). That was the time when famous perfume houses such as Guerlain came to light. The twentieth century brought Coty, followed by Roger & Gallet, and Bourjois. The perfume

houses inspired contemporary fashion designers to launch perfumes of their own. That was when fashion and perfumes got together, adding more sophistication to modern perfumery (ROUDNITSKA, 2000, p.4). During the twentieth century, nothing changed and Paris has stood at the apex of prestige for perfumes and fragrances.

All this mythical background of sophistication and refinement is activated in the audience when the advertisement unfolds before them. The name in French – *La vie est belle* – together with the image of the iconic Eiffel tower certainly trigger the readers' *schemata* and help them associate issues of power related to France and good perfumes, leading them to interpret the product as genuine and worth buying.

4.3.4 Success and the wearing of perfume

Every social group adopts particular meanings that are imposed on its members by culture and language. These meanings are codified in such a way that the group itself finds it almost impossible to express themselves without resorting to the concept given by their community.

In order to be considered an insider in the group, a member must be identified as part of the community by the powerful. According to Kramsch, “only the powerful decide whose values and beliefs will be deemed worth adopting by the group, which historical events are worth commemorating, which future is worth imagining” (KRAMSCH, 2009, p.9). In this sense, the members of a certain social group attain common views of the world by means of interactions among the members of the same group. It is important to notice that these acquired views are reinforced throughout the members' lives by opinion leadership-forming institutions such as the family, the school, the workplace, the church, the government, and the media. That explains the importance of perfumes in the main western social groups: the powerful and rich decide the values and beliefs that are considered worthy and they are the ones who can afford to buy a bottle of perfume.

One of the outcomes of the process described above is that perfumes, nowadays, are taken as signatures that are worn to reflect one's personality. That image of power derived from perfumes is constructed, among other devices, by advertisements, as perfumes actually have no particular significance other than that of showing the power of their bearers. Therefore, no real information can be given about a certain bottle of perfume, and that is why, in order to convey the portrait of perfumes as essential products, images must be drawn from the outside world. “The technique of advertising is to correlate feelings, moods or attributes to tangible

objects, linking possible, unattainable things with those that *are* attainable, and thus reassuring us that the former are within reach.” (WILLIAMSON, 1978, p.31)

As a result of the construction of images by advertisements, nowadays perfumes have the capacity of leaving an olfactive impression that reminds people of the person who wears them. Once perfumes are taken as sophisticated and generally stand as expensive products, people tend to consider their bearers outstanding and successful people who may project a feeling on a group, and even exert power on a social community. Even though advertisements cannot transmit the scent of perfumes through the media, the images that are built up tend to influence the readers in such a way that when smelling a fragrance, which may last for hours, people are in for considering the perfume's bearer as someone unique. All that ideology is fostered due to the influence that advertisements exert on audiences.

As a matter of fact, advertisements mediate two systems of meaning involved. On the one hand, the image of Julia Roberts, that can be taken as the signifier. On the other hand, success, beauty, and freedom, which are the signified. They relate to each other by means of the advertisement, which brings these two systems together and make them interchangeable.

Thus, advertisements not only give perfumes a social meaning, but also have the power of reflecting social developments. Publicity, then, encourages audiences to create their own identities through goods in such a way that, in a consumer society, its members relate to one another through the language of their possessions,¹³ even if the product advertised is brought to the audience by a commercial that gives no real information about the merchandise.

4.3.5 The concept of the ideal woman in Western society

It is now undeniable that the concept of the ideal woman is ideological, once it is forged by society, although unconsciously taken as common sense. In the *La vie est belle* advertisement, there is a shift in expectation: the hegemonic ideology of women as powerless, occupying a subordinating, passive position, is replaced by the image of a daring, liberated woman, which, to a certain extent, undermines the traditional concept of the ideal woman in an inferior and lower position if compared to man. By picturing a woman that way, using the representation of Julia Roberts as a cultural symbol of emancipation, welfare, and joy, the advertising crew wishes to reach the unconscious level of the women in the audience to the point of being unable to resist to the search for an imaginary, unreachable self, making

¹³ *Decoding Advertisements*, by Judith Williamson, Preface to the 15th edition, Kobo Edition, 2002

available the opportunity to change the self by means of buying the symbolic connotation of the perfume (WILLIAMSON, 1978, p.26). The purchasing of the bottle of perfume, then, allows women to express their desires by first choosing from an array of options in the market and then associating imaginary and unconscious symbols to the rational wearing of the product.

Such an approach to the image of women is part of the contemporary gender construction designed for western capitalist societies. The people who are part of such social groups participate in a quest for acceptance and validation and, as consumers, they are encouraged to purchase the product that is being promoted. In a capitalist world where women are an important part of the work force, in order to stimulate the selling of the merchandise, the ideal women are depicted in a way so as to embody a gender role according to the trends considered desirable and appropriate by the society they are part of. Nevertheless, according to what is shown in the ad, the modern feminine stereotyped model still requires traditional traits, such as youth and beauty.

4.3.6 Hollywood

The choice of having a movie star presenting the French perfume is not a coincidence at all. According to Jones, in the first half of the twentieth century - and from then on - Hollywood movies available worldwide have helped the celebrity culture derived from it exert a wide appeal. This way, the Hollywood movies have served as a powerful diffuser of beauty ideas. The author also states that “The Hollywood film studios and the beauty industry shared a common interest in the globalization of consumer markets” (JONES, 2010, p.126). As a matter of fact, the combination of the framed sophistication of the French perfume with the celebrity culture derived from the Hollywood stars established a strong partnership that influenced Western societies with its powers and ideologies of capitalist consumption and paradigms of beauty and glamour.

In order to establish the perfume’s legitimacy and convey credibility, the Lancôme advertising crew invited a well-famed Hollywood actress who was chosen to add truthfulness to the discourse constructed so as to allure the audiences.

Paris, with its tradition in perfume making, and Hollywood, with its expertise in the diffusion of beauty ideas, are reunited in the one-minute movie that tells the story of a woman who wants to be free from conventions. The motion picture, directed by Tarsem Singh, an

Indian-born experienced movie-maker, was shot in Los Angeles, in February 2012. The concept behind the advertisement is “The freedom to choose our own vision of happiness”¹⁴. The production is self-designed as “a declaration for a new era”.

4.3.7 Greek gods

As previously mentioned in this paper, images are powerful instruments to remind readers of already learned beliefs and ideologies in a context of culture. Once assimilated, those beliefs impel that specific audience to take the conventions as implicit common-sense assumptions. In a group of observers, there will certainly be some people who, due to the way Julia Roberts is presented in the production, will connect the *La vie est belle* advertisement to some personal concepts concerning mythological goddesses and that can be considered as an instance of intertextuality between the ad and Homer’s and Hesiod’s ancient Greek literary works. As a matter of fact, the actress playing in this ad works as an allegory: a story in which the characters and events are symbols that stand for ideas about human life or for a political or historical situation¹². The woman who emerges in the advertisement clearly shares some characteristics with the Greek goddess Aphrodite, if compared and contrasted to Homer’s accounts. Perhaps, the main idea shared is the longing for immortality, the feeling of being unforgettable, and the ability Aphrodite has to make men fall in love with her. But there are other features that can be discussed. In the *Illiad*, for instance, Aphrodite is twice qualified as *bright*, and *fair*, and six times named *golden*. Her divinity is asserted nine times by the appositive *daughter of Zeus* or *Zeus’s daughter*, and happiness and joy are certainly important traces of her personality, as she is qualified as *laughter-loving* five times. All these elements are noticeable in Julia Robert’s image in the motion picture: she smiles all the time, she is a free spirit who does not follow conventions, she is attractive, elegant, sexy, and lovely.

In the *Theogon*, Hesiod (5: 190-197) also describes Aphrodite’s birth with similarities to the way the actress is portrayed in the advertisement: beautiful and surrounded by a kind of white, pearly and bright color that could remind some readers of the famous Botticelli’s *Birth of Venus*, in another instance of intertextuality. Aphrodite was created from the foam of the crystal waters, in the fragrant island of Cyprus and this olfactory element can be connected to the perfume itself:

¹⁴ Available at <http://www.lancome-usa.com/La-vie-est-belle/100606,default.pd.html>. Accessed on 14 April, 2015.

¹² According to definition found in <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/allegory>.

Around them [Uranus's genitals] a white foam from the immortal skin began to arise. In it, a maiden was nurtured. First, she drew near holy Kythera, and from there she arrived at Kypros [Cyprus] surrounded by water. From within, a majestic and beautiful goddess stepped, and all around grass grew beneath her slender feet. Aphrodite [foam-born goddess and fair-wreathed Kythereia] gods and men call her because she was nurtured in foam.

Another feature which can be related to the goddess of love, beauty, and eternal youth is noticed at the end of the motion picture, when the actress climbs a staircase, suggesting her superiority to all the other guests in the party, in a clear reference to Mount Olympus, the place where the Greek gods live. (Figure 9) The image of Julia Roberts climbing the stairs is supported by Goffman (1979, pp. 40-43), when approaching the ritualization of subordination:

A classic stereotype of deference is that of lowering oneself physically in some form or other of prostration. Correspondingly, holding the body erect and the head high is stereotypically a mark of unashamedness, superiority, and disdain. Advertisers draw on (and endorse) the claimed universality of the theme. ... elevation seems to be employed indicatively in our society, high physical place symbolizing high social place.

The atmosphere that is created in the ad so as to portray the features described above fosters the myth that helps to fulfill women's fantasies by means of the purchasing of a bottle of *La vie est belle*. In a perfume advertisement aimed at women, the analogy between gods of the old Greek Mythology and real human archetypes is not rare. In the case of *La vie est belle* advertisement, the sensual Aphrodite is played by a powerful woman. But there are some similarities with another goddess from the Olympus, Artemis, the goddess of liberty, making it clear that there is a high participation of the female archetype of the free sensual woman represented both by Aphrodite and Artemis in perfume commercials aimed at women. The same happens when the perfume is meant for men. The main hero archetypes of power and success are generally used, with the presence of Eros, or Odysseus, known as models of strategist and intelligence.

The stairway reminds the reader of Mount Olympus and Julia Roberts, a Greek goddess.

4.3.8 Use of colors in the ad

The main purpose of an advertisement is to call the reader's attention so as to transform him/her into a consumer. One of the most efficient ways of appealing to the audience is through the use of colors. That is why advertising experts give a lot of attention to how colors can convey different meanings in a lot of different contexts. Most of all, the use of colors will project the image of the product.

In the *La vie est belle* movie two contrasting colors prevail and help to portray the setting: black and white. These two colors started to be closely associated as opposites in the late fifteenth century, with the advent of printing, in the 1450s. This shift in the point of view concerning the two colors meant an innovation from a cultural perspective, concerning both knowledge and sensibility (PASTOUREAU, 2008, p.114). Isaac Newton's discovery of the spectrum in the seventeenth century brought a new order of colors and a new theory on color perception, in which black and white were removed from the chromatic system.

In the nineteenth century, the hegemony of black and white resumed with the invention of photography and the boost of daily newspapers showing their readers current events of everyday life in those two colors. The artistic world was also influenced by this new way of considering the contrastive opposition of black and white. From the end of the 1800s to the mid 1900s, there was a trend of limiting views of the world and sensibilities to black and white (PASTOUREAU, 2008, p.178). Still in the nineteenth century, the advent of the cinema helped lengthen those two opposed colors' leadership. After World War I, the status of black was restored and it resumed to be considered a true color. That was the time when artists, industrials and fashion designers made black a symbol of modernity, elegance, creativity and power (PASTOUREAU, 2008, p.189).

However, in *La vie est belle* advertisement, white prevails in power, challenging and competing with black. Traditionally, "whiteness came to convey an intense physical beauty in itself" (MIRZOEFF, 2009, p.56). It seems that Julia Robert's whiteness is related to beauty. However, wearing white in opposition to all the other characters in the advert means something else. Julia is different from all the other people in the party because she is wearing a perfume that makes her seem superior to all the other people and this is reinforced by the opposition between herself (the perfume's wearer) and the others - those who don't wear *La vie est belle*.

The identity of the perfume's wearer is then created in that specific context of the party through the opposition supported by the wearing of the two contrastive colors which share a long cultural history of association of opposites. The guests' identities are symbolically co-constructed, as long as the perfume's bearer (who is shown confident and daring) in white is what the other guests (formal and conventional) in black are not. The multiple identities which are present among the audience, then, recognize themselves and develop a feeling of empathy towards the main character symbolically manifested oriented by the opposition of colors, among other elements. Identity construction always implies inclusionary and exclusionary processes.

Another reason for using black and white is that, in general, the difference among perfumes is not striking, as long as they are meant just to add something else to the wearer's looks. That is why it is necessary to create a differentiation among them if the intention is to sell the product. Advertisers must, then, create a powerful image that succeeds in contrasting their product with the others. In a world dominated by color, like the current one, creating an ad in black and white can be taken as a daring feat that will certainly call the audience attention. The question that comes up to their minds is concerned to the reasons why the advertisement was all planned in black and white.

Besides, while black is recently taken as the smooth shade of exclusivity and tradition, a mark of excellence, and a very formal color in advertising, generally linked to the corporate world, white is taken and used a lot to depict cleanness, modernity and abstraction.¹⁵

4.3.9 Fairy tales

There is a clear relationship or symbiotic connection between the fairy tale and myth, as long as both are instances that enable people to codify and order their lives. One could say that the fairy tales have undergone a process of mythicization, because they are brought into daily experience and serve as resources that people use in order to find answers to some of their questions. By means of those narratives, humans are able to build up roles for themselves. Fairy tales, then, help bring members of a group closer together, making them feel as part of a universal community with shared values and norms. Through fairy tales, people tend to believe that there are certain dreams and wishes which are irrefutable and that a

¹⁵ Available at <http://library.thinkquest.org/08aug/01276/colorsanddesign/colorinadvertising.html>. Accessed on 2 February, 2015.

particular type of behavior will produce guaranteed results, like living happily ever after (ZIPES, 1994, p.1-4). All these factors reinforce the feeling of belonging to a certain social group, sharing ideas and bearing a peculiar social identity that makes the group unique and that helps them recognize themselves when they are exposed to an already known or lived situation.

The *La vie est belle* advertisement may remind the audience of Pinocchio's tale. In the story originally written by Carlo Collodi, in 1881, the iconic wooden puppet gets rid of the strings attached to him and comes to life, turning out into a real human being. That scene clearly shows Pinocchio's decision of leaving his past dark and hostile life behind and starting a new phase where he is smart enough to be the owner of his own life. In the ad, when getting rid of the silver strings around her wrists, the main character played by Julia Roberts leaves a dull life behind and its "dictates and conventions" and climbs the stairway towards freedom and a life full of emotions.

All in all, one of the possible readings of the ad could suggest that by setting free from the silver strings, the character Julia Roberts plays in the movies breaks free from the dictates and conventions of life that are mentioned in the very beginning of the ad.

5 **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

One aspect to be observed in this present work is the fact that, although Halliday has enlarged the range of semiotic resources so as to encompass other kinds of languages – verbal and non-verbal, his theories are more focused on verbal language. That is why his concepts have not been widely applied in this case study, as long as non-verbal language prevails in the *La vie est belle* text in detriment of verbal language. Therefore – to a certain extent - Halliday's theories were left aside in this paper although they had worked as a starting point. As a matter of fact, some other theorists were more in accordance with this writer's point of view concerning the use of images in advertisements. The use of Halliday's theories to the analysis of discourse can be the focus of future studies to be developed in the field of advertisements. The same does not happen to CDA due to the fact that it bears a holistic and interdisciplinary approach that makes it easy to explore when analyzing pictures.

Perfume ads are so popular that they gave way to new advertisements on different products. Sharing the same features explored in perfume publicity - seduction, beauty, success, and glamour - there are now dozens of works in the same line. With this in mind, an idea for another future investigation related to this case study could be discussed and developed with a group of students, or in a new monograph. Such a theme came out of the recently watching of a brand new TV advertisement. That new piece is a parody on perfume ads that plays with the idea of learning English with the right pronunciation, abusing of the idea of seduction shown in that kind of commercial. By comparing and contrasting the features used in both ads, a researcher could go deeper into the reading of images and learn a lot from that kind of analysis.

The verbal and non-verbal features are certainly used in the ad in order to call the reader's attention to the product announced. The audience is moved to buy the perfume because the knowledge conveyed both through the images and verbal language is shared. At the same time, both verbal and non-verbal language work together in order to suggest that buying a bottle of perfume is enough not only to get rid of a life full of rules and conventions, but also to lead a better and luxurious life full of glamour and joy.

The context of situation, that is, the relations between language use and social interaction, is of great importance in the advertisement. The production depicts an opulent, luxuriant party, where beautiful, elegant participants play specific statuses and roles in contrast with the main character played by Julia Roberts, who shares all the qualities of the

other characters, but in an ultimate position in relation to them all. Although very few verbal actions are taken, participants accomplish a lot of non-verbal actions deriving a lot of meaning to the audience. The setting and the events play a crucial role in order to establish the context of situation, making it easy for a Western audience to understand the message: the purchase of the perfume will further the reaching of happiness, success, and freedom.

The extralinguistic social level – the context of situation - happens within the context of culture which, in turn, is composed of a group of social processes mediated by language. The context of culture comprises a wide range of possible meanings codified in a certain culture, defining the myriad of possibilities that, at first, are open. A certain social activity will then be given purpose and meaning according to the context of culture. The genre of a text is determined by the participants in a social activity with the help of the context of culture. This way, the genre advertisement in this case study can be easily identified by an audience immersed in a capitalist consumer society who understands quite well the purpose of such genre.

Another aspect to be considered is that the discourse present in the advertisement “involves participants who are separated in place and time”, typical of mass media, and entailing *hidden* relations of power (FAIRCLOUGH, 1989, pp.49-50) in a capitalist environment. As long as the advert producer has the authority to decide the pieces of information to be included or excluded, he/she exerts power over the audience. Furthermore, all the ideology that the wearing of a French perfume conveys is embedded in the one-minute advertisement piece. That ideology forges interactions between competitive perfume producers and their customers, shaping media practices and texts (FAIRCLOUGH, 1995b, p.42).

In his famous inaugural lecture delivered at Collège de France in 1970, Foucault formulates a hypothesis that comes in our aid when the subject is analyzing discourse, be it verbal or non-verbal. He brings forth a question that has a lot to do with all that has been said so far. He highlights the fact that the production of discourse, no matter the social group in which it is performed, is immediately controlled, selected, organized and redistributed according to a series of interests and concerns that underlie that group and that leads it to the settling of its own “rules of exclusion”, that is, the external delimitations that constrain discourse and that are strongly related to issues of power and ideology (FOUCAULT, 1972,

p.216). This idea is something that the discourse analysis researcher must regularly bear in mind.

Concerning ideology, advertisements are produced taking into consideration the systems of beliefs found within a certain culture. These ideologies comprise shared sets of values and beliefs that inform everyday life. The concept that perfumes are worn by outstanding and successful people shows values that are made to seem natural. And advertisements and media are ways through which audiences are persuaded to hold and share these values (STURKEN & CARTWRIGHT, 2009, p.21). Therefore, as the producers' ideological representations are naturalized, acquiring the position of common sense and becoming opaque and invisible as ideologies (FAIRCLOUGH, 1995a, p.42), the wearing of a certain perfume now implies "a medium of self-expression in a consumer society where identity has become a purchasable style" (PEISS, 2011, p.4).

When analyzing discourse, one is making an effort to understand how people within specific social situations attempt to influence others through language (BAZERMAN, 2004, P.281). In that sense, advertisements are a way capitalist societies use in order to rearrange ideas already present in a social community. The concepts that circulate within a social group are put together and actually make sense to the potential customers, impelling them to make a decision and buy a product.

The gathering of objects which are signified in ideological systems, making them signifiers of these systems by rearranging them in terms of another structure. ... is clearly very apt for the process I have described as taking place in ads: they can only use odds and ends from ideological thought that already exists. In this sense ads are similar to the rites and myths which, Lévi-Strauss suggests, 'like "bricolage" ... take to pieces and reconstruct sets of events (on a physical, socio-historical or technical plane) and use them as so many indestructible pieces for structural patterns in which they serve alternatively as ends or means.' (WILLIAMSON, 1978, p.101)

The ideologically shaped ideas that are spread in a social community are strengthened by the relations of power and ideology that are present in the everyday discourse of the group. When watching an ad produced with the intention of attracting consumers, all the subliminal knowledge present in the audience's minds is rearranged so as to make sense. Concerning this aspect of the discussion, it is important to emphasize that the analysis produced in this study is only one possibility of the many that could be carried out.

We pick and choose the elements that we assemble to form the entire picture of an object, a person, or a scene. ... We do not abstract all the features that are within the range of our senses to form a consistent whole. We do not abstract all the features that we can perceive, we select those that we are interested in, those that we are in the habit of paying attention to, or those that suit our purpose at the moment; and we ignore the rest. (BOIS, 1971, p.64)

All in all, the success of communication made through an advertisement is based on the fact that humans make unconscious predictions about what others are going to say next based on the context of situation. That is the key to the communication between the participants – producers, actors in the motion picture, and audience. Also, in a technological age like this, which is able to make film works, television, and computers available everywhere, the visual component in communication has reached a relationship to society and education never achieved before, playing an ever-increasing role on daily basis. Thus, universal visual literacy as a learned skill is now an imperative tool for creating meaning through images and so, the encouragement to the development of visual intelligence is paramount in the present period.

The reading of images certainly helps readers understand the world better. The combination between image, language, and music enables an improved understanding of the message encompassed in the advertisement. Last, but not least, one could establish a relation between the analysis of images and the way this technique could help students learn how to read the world and society around them. By being able to do that, learners could be more aware, as long as this kind of critical reading not only provides them with more autonomy, independence, and emancipation, but also increases their consciousness of “how [any kind of] language contributes to the domination of some people by others, because consciousness is the first step towards emancipation” (FAIRCLOUGH, 1989, p.1).

6 APPENDICES

Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10



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